

**Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case**  
by Chris Crowe (Published by Phyllis Fogelman Books)

Approved for use in Communication Arts II and Honors Communication Arts II

**Summary**

*Getting Away with Murder* is a non-fiction novel about Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African American boy from Chicago, who was killed while on a visit to Mississippi in 1955. Chris Crowe retells the story of the events leading up to Till's death. Information from the trial that acquits the two men accused, including their confessions, is shared. The author uses testimony from the trial and interviews to present Till's significance to the Civil Rights movement.

**Connection to the Curriculum**

*Getting Away with Murder* is a non-fiction book that can be used as a companion with *Secret Life of Bees*, *Ellen Foster*, and/or *Boy's Life*. Students can review and discuss the historical context associated with the events of the text and can discuss cause and effect. They can examine how an author's beliefs are evident in a text—even in a piece written as non-fiction. Students can also engage in research using primary and secondary sources and compare their findings with the text.

**Standards**

**Course Objectives (Benchmarks)**

**Reading:** 1.2- The students read fluently. 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

**Literature:** 2.1-The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

**Writing:** 3.1- The students use writing as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum. 3.2- The students use a writing process that includes preparing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing to produce a written text.

**Research:** 4.1- The students use effective research practices. 4.2- The students use ethical research practices.

**Possible Skills Taught (Indicators):**

**Reading:**

1.2.1- The student adjusts reading rate to support comprehension when reading narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.3.3- The student determines meaning of words through structural analysis using knowledge of Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon roots, prefixes, and suffixes to understand complex words.

1.4.7- The student identifies the characteristics of narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.14- The student explains and analyzes cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.18- The student establishes purposes for both assigned and self-selected reading.

**Literature:**

2.1.2- The student analyzes the historical, social, and cultural contextual aspects of the setting and its influence on characters and events in the story.

2.1.4- The student recognizes how an author's beliefs are reflected in his work.

2.2.7- The student compares and contrasts works of literature that deal with similar topics and problems.

**Writing:**

3.1.1- The student uses the writing process to write essays.

3.9.35- The student writes expository pieces.

**Research:**

4.1.3- The student verifies the accuracy, relevance, and completeness of information.

4.1.4- The student analyzes the complexities and discrepancies in information and systematically organizes relevant information to support central ideas, concepts, and themes.

4.2.2- The student expresses information in his/her own words using organization, grammar, word choice, and tone appropriate for the audience.

**A Note on the Text**

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

*The author discusses the actual murder of a young boy including the racial slurs accompanying the events. The text is illustrated with pictures including a photograph of Emmett Till in his coffin. The picture was publicized in Jet magazine, the news, and other publications during the time of Till's death.*

**AP Connections**

The story of Emmett Till provides honors students an additional work of non-fiction to examine. Non-fiction works appear regularly on the AP Language exam.

**Additional Unit Design Connections**

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities